CHAPTER XVI.

THE SEASHORE.

The seashore, where the first Irishmen picked up a living some thousands of years ago, still plays a significant role in the islands and around the coasts and is laid under contribution for seaweed and drift weed (wrack), for sand and gravel, and for accessory supplies of food. On many an Irish strand too, seasonal festivals, horse-racing and country games have only slowly given way to holiday makers from the city. Communal rights in the seashore were jealously guarded, and one constantly comes across ancient customs that have survived in this most changeless of environments. I recall the countryman " on the brew " (bureau ; that is, on the dole) whom I watched in County Down twisting on his bare thigh, his palm dried with a dusting of wood-ash from the hearth, the two-ply " crop " of horse-hair for his fishing line—each ply consisting of twenty-one strands taken from the tail of a white mare. This method of twisting is found amongst almost all primitive peoples, and can be paralleled, for instance, from the remote Andaman Islands. His outfit for codling fishing is illustrated in Fig. 94, which shows two hair crops attached to a home-made sinker of lead—called from its shape a " frog " ; the use of horse-hair has survived in this case because it is stiffer than gut and serves to keep the hooks from fouling each other. Rock-fishing lines in Co. Antrim are sometimes made of black horse-hair, but for the part next the hook, called the foot-line, white hair is used. Well-made lines of carefully selected hair

22 [283] 227 226 [237]

[TEXT CONTINUES TOP OF P. 144—ANALYST]